

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 1, 6, 9, 12, and 13. The following is a complete listing of the claims, and replaces all earlier versions and listings.

1. (Currently Amended) A ~~print control client~~ apparatus for transmitting print data to a printer such that the printer prints out the print data and for performing user authentication processing in print processing, comprising:

a job combination unit for combining a plurality of print jobs into a single combined print job;

a request unit for, by means of a printer driver, issuing a request, including an input user ID, to an authentication server for obtaining permission to print the single combined print job combined by said job combination unit; and

a transmission control unit in which a printer driver controls a process so that, when permission is obtained from the authentication server, print data based upon the single combined print job is generated by means of the printer driver and transmitted to a printer, but when permission is not obtained from the authentication server (i) the print data based upon the single combined print job is not generated by means of the printer driver and (ii) an indication that permission was not obtained from the authentication server is transmitted to a job accounting application by means of the printer driver.

2. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a counting unit for counting a print amount including a number of prints to be printed

by the combined print job, and transmitting information about the counted print amount to a counting server.

3. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1,
wherein the authentication server and the print control apparatus are connected via
a communication network, and
the communication network is connected to a plurality of printers.

4. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the
authentication server is included in the printer.

5. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the print
control apparatus includes a host computer.

6. (Currently Amended) A ~~print control~~ client method of transmitting print data
to a printer such that the printer prints out the print data and for performing user authentication
processing in print processing, comprising:

a job combination step of combining a plurality of print jobs into a single
combined print job;

an authentication request step of, by means of a printer driver, issuing an
authentication request, including an input user ID, to an authentication server for obtaining
permission to print the single print job combined in the job combination step; and

a transmission control step in which a printer driver controls a process so that, when permission is obtained from the authentication server, print data based upon the single combined print job is generated by means of the printer driver and transmitted to a printer, but when permission is not obtained from the authentication server (i) the print data based upon the single combined print job is not generated by means of the printer driver and (ii) an indication that permission was not obtained from the authentication server is transmitted to a job accounting application by means of the printer driver.

7. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 6, further comprising a counting step of counting a print amount including a number of prints to be printed by the combined print job, and transmitting information about the counted print amount to a counting server.

8. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 6, wherein the authentication server is included in the printer.

9. (Currently Amended) A ~~computer-readable~~ client storage medium which stores a computer program for transmitting print data to a printer such that the printer prints out the print data and for performing user authentication processing in print processing, including:

a code of a job combination step of combining a plurality of print jobs into a single combined print job;

a code of an authentication request step of, by means of a printer driver, issuing an authentication request, including an input user ID, to an authentication server for obtaining permission to print the single combined print job combined in the job combination step; and

a code of a transmission control step in which a printer driver controls a process so that, when permission is obtained from the authentication server, print data based upon the single combined print job is generated by means of the printer driver and transmitted to a printer, but when permission is not obtained from the authentication server (i) the print data based upon the single combined print job is not generated by means of the printer driver and (ii) an indication that permission was not obtained from the authentication server is transmitted to a job accounting application by means of the printer driver.

10. (Previously Presented) The medium according to claim 9, further comprising a code of a counting step of counting a print amount including a number of prints to be printed by the combined print job, and transmitting information about the counted print amount to a counting server.

11. (Previously Presented) The medium according to claim 9, wherein the authentication server is included in the printer.

12. (Currently Amended) A ~~computer program~~ client stored on a computer-readable medium which, when executed, performs a method for transmitting print data to a printer such that the printer prints out the print data and for performing user authentication processing in print processing, the program comprising:

a code of an job combination step of combining a plurality of print jobs into a single combined print job;

a code of an authentication request step of, by means of a printer driver, issuing an authentication request, including an input user ID, to an authentication server for obtaining permission to print the single print job combined in the job combination step; and

a code of a transmission control step in which a printer driver controls a process so that, when permission is obtained from the authentication server, print data based upon the single combined print job is generated by means of the printer driver and transmitted to a printer, but when permission is not obtained from the authentication server (i) the print data based upon the single combined print job is not generated by means of the printer driver and (ii) an indication that permission was not obtained from the authentication server is transmitted to a job accounting application by means of the printer driver.

13. (Currently Amended) A ~~print system~~ client for performing user authentication processing in print processing, comprising:

a print control apparatus having a job combination unit for transmitting print data to a printer such that the printer prints out the print data and for combining a plurality of print jobs into a single combined print job, an authentication request unit for issuing an authentication request, including an input user ID, to an authentication server for obtaining permission to print the single combined print job combined by the job combination unit, and a transmission control unit in which a printer driver controls a process so that, when permission is obtained from the authentication server, print data based upon the single combined print job is generated by means of the printer driver and transmitted to a printer, but when permission is not obtained from the

authentication server (i) the print data based upon the single combined print job is not generated by means of the printer driver and (ii) an indication that permission was not obtained from the authentication server is transmitted to a job accounting application by means of the printer driver, and

wherein the authentication server is connected to said print control apparatus.

14. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 13, further comprising a counting server connected to said print control apparatus, and said print control apparatus counts a print amount including a number of prints to be printed by the combined print job, and transmits information about the counted print amount to the counting server.

15. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 13, wherein said authentication server is included in one of printers connected to said print control apparatus.

16. - 44. (Canceled)

45. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the printer driver controls the transmission process so as to generate a print command using the combined print job held in a storage unit and transmits the print command to the printer.

46. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 6, wherein,

in said transmission control step, the printer driver controls the transmission process so as to generate a print command using the combined print job held in a storage unit and transmits the print command to the printer.